

## REVIEWS

Sawin, Patricia and Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt, eds. *Folklore in the United States and Canada: An Institutional History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 322 pp. \$85 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-253-05287-2. \$35 (paper). ISBN 978-0-253-05289-6.

Folklorists have studied the heritage and genealogy of various communities, so it is only fitting that a new history of the field of North American folkloristics should examine the genealogy of folklorists. While not quite a “biography” of the field, the 26 discrete articles in *Folklore in the United States and Canada: An Institutional History*, edited and with an introduction and conclusion by Patricia Sawin and Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt, examine the evolution and history of folkloristics as it evolved in 24 (mostly) graduate programs in American and Canadian colleges and universities.

The volume’s articles are divided into three sections. The first explores programs that emerged prior to the 1960s; the second looks at the prospering of folklore programs in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily at public Canadian and American universities. This section begins with a nostalgic article by Zumwalt on “‘The Great Team’ of American Folklorists: Characters Large in Life and Grand in Plans,” in which she looks at the “young Turks” who became the “founding fathers” of the field in the 1960s (Stith Thompson, Richard Dorson, Alan Dundes, Dan Ben-Amos et al.). The collegiality and collaboration (in spite of some notable rivalries) that built the field emerge clearly in her essay. She points out that the team of American folklorists “did not develop from one center outward but was an interconnected flow of people and ideas among centers of folklore,” each strengthening the others and being strengthened in turn (72). The third section looks at the period of innovation, reshaping, and diversity from 1980 to 2010. Thus, program descriptions run the gamut from the academic degree program in folklore and mythology at Harvard, established in 1967 by Albert Bates Lord (written by Rachel Kirby and Anthony Bak Buccitelli) to the recently founded (2007) community-oriented program in cultural sustainability at Goucher College (Amy E. Skillman and Rory Turner).

The essays reveal an enormous variety in program structures: while some folklore programs are based in a department or institute of their own, others have found a home in related disciplinary departments (notably languages, ethnology, anthropology) and interdisciplinary programs (regional and area studies). None of the essays is long, yet each provides detailed documentation about the people who created the programs and taught in them, the challenges they faced, and the accomplishments they achieved. Many photographs of leaders in the field enhance the volume. No less important, the essays provide practical hints about how to win friends within the institution, get support from colleagues at other academic centers, engage in strategic thinking about program building, and negotiate with one’s own administration for a place in the curriculum.

Not surprisingly, given its American and Canadian scope, the volume focuses primarily on regional North American, Anglophone, Francophone, and immigrant folklore, although many of the larger programs include international folklore. Of particular interest to Slavic folklorists is Natalie Kononenko's essay, "From Ukrainian Studies to Folklore on the Prairies," in which she outlines the history and achievements of the Kule Center for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore at the University of Alberta. With its primary (but not exclusive) focus on Ukrainian emigrants to Canada, the Kule Center occupies a special niche in the history of folkloristics in North America.

To the program descriptions the volume adds an essay on "The Future out of the Past" (Jesse A. Fivecoate, Kristina Downs, and Meredith A. E. McGriff). Appropriately, its authors are junior scholars and members of the planning committee for the Conference on the Future of American Folkloristics (held 18-20 May 2017 at Indiana University Bloomington). After raising the issues that professional folklorists confront, they emphasize that "the discipline cannot speak with one voice, but that when we speak together, and to each other, we clarify visions of our future and make progress toward realizing them" (286).

*Folklore in the United States and Canada: An Institutional History* is comprehensive in its scope. It was written by and for scholars of folklore and related disciplines and should be read by them, on the principle that those who seek to find the path forward should know where the path led from and what has been gained (or lost) along the way. After all, not all folklore programs escaped institutional dismantlement (including major Ph.D. granting programs at the Universities of Pennsylvania, Texas at Austin, and California, Los Angeles). Folkloristics, like other fields, has had to deal with shrinking budgets, changing administrative priorities, and the corporatization of higher education.

When the volume's intended readers pick it up, they will be certain to turn first to the program where they studied and which shaped them (which this reviewer confesses she did), but they should come away from the volume with a much better sense of their own academic legacy and of the astonishing variety of academic folklore (heritage, popular culture, etc.) programs that exist in North America today. Each has its own emphasis, theoretical profile, ethos, and mission, but together they have the power to be greater than the sum of their parts. The volume also reminds readers that, while folkloristics may no longer be an "emerging" discipline, the future health of the field will need constant and careful curation.

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